

A Proposal to Redistrict New York

I am a redistricting hobbyist who submitted the following plan to the court. I have no connections to New York Politics; my motivation simply stems from a desire to see the redistricting process produce geographically and culturally coherent, fair districts. I hope you will find the following plan (described fully in Pub-Smith-BlockEq.csv and Pub-Smith-Racial.csv) useful in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Smith

Some notes on this plan:

*Counties are only split for reasons of equal population or allowing minorities to elect a candidate of their choice. Beyond that, I attempted to keep communities of interest together and create compact districts.

* I did not take into account incumbency when drawing this map, though I did favor creating competitive seats when that was a possibility.

* This map has very small deviations because my mapping tool does not allow me to split precincts. A small number (~25) of carefully chosen precinct splits will solve this problem.

District 1:

As this district did not require a large number of changes, I hewed closely to the legislative intent of ten years ago. Eastern Suffolk forms a compact, culturally coherent, and politically competitive district.

District 2:

The remainder of Suffolk County also forms a compact, culturally coherent, and politically competitive district. A small portion of the South Shore was united with Nassau County's South Shore in the 3rd district.

District 3:

The South Shore of Nassau County, including most of the towns of Hempstead, and Oyster Bay form the core of this district. Dividing the North and South shores in Nassau County results in more compact seats after placing the county's heavily African American communities in the majority minority district 5.

District 4:

This politically competitive district covers the North Shore of Nassau County and culturally similar areas in Whitestone, Queens.

District 5:

This African-American majority by voting age population district leaves Queens to allow the African American communities in Nassau County areas like Elmont, Hempstead, and Roosevelt to elect the candidate of their choice.

District 6:

This compact district unites culturally similar areas in South Brooklyn and Queens which have been divided up several ways under the current plan. Orthodox Jewish and Russian-American communities, whose influence was limited under previous plans that divided this area multiple ways, will have a strong influence on this seat.

District 7:

This district covers areas of central Queens. It is a diverse seat with a strong Asian minority population and comprises largely middle class areas of a single borough.

District 8:

A successor to the current Hispanic-opportunity district 12, this seat allows Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan Hispanics to continue to elect the candidate of their choice while forming a much more compact district than its prior incarnation.

District 9:

This seat unites much of the culturally unique borough of Manhattan in a single compact seat.

District 10:

This African American majority district is similar to the current district 10, but now largely unites the culturally similar communities in Downtown Brooklyn like Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, and Carroll Gardens.

District 11:

This African American majority district is similar to the current district 11; however, to gain population while remaining compact it expands west into the western part of the Borough to take in the diverse communities of Red Hook and Sunset Park.

District 12:

This Staten Island based district did not need major additional population so I hewed closely to the legislative intent of 2002 by adding portions of the Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights neighborhoods.

District 13:

This new majority Hispanic district allows Hispanics in the communities of Corona and Soundview to elect a candidate of their choice in this compact district.

District 14:

This compact, majority Hispanic seat preserves Bronx Hispanics' ability to elect a candidate of choice while also extending that ability to Hispanics living in the Upper Manhattan neighborhoods of Washington Heights and Inwood, just across the Harlem River.

District 15:

This plurality African American district unites the major African American communities in northern New York City, Harlem and Williamsbridge. It does not extend out of the city into Westchester County, avoiding an additional unnecessary county split.

District 16:

This seat is based around inner suburban communities of the outer Bronx and lower Westchester County. Note that the city of Yonkers is united in one seat after many years of being divided in a rather arbitrary fashion.

District 17:

This district encompasses the entire county of Rockland, divided in 3 under the current map, and pairs it with similar suburban areas of Westchester County. I-287 forms a major backbone of this district as a major route for commerce and commuter populations.

District 18:

This politically competitive district covers Hudson Valley communities on the outermost fringes of New York City. It takes note of legislative intent by being relatively similar in form to the present District 19.

District 19:

This politically competitive district covers a diverse set of Hudson Valley Counties south and west of the Albany area. This district has relatively few suburban areas and thus serves as a rural and small city community of interest.

District 20:

This compact seat covers the core of the capital region. Albany, Schenectady, Troy, and their suburbs both form both a unified metro area and sum to the perfect population for a congressional seat.

District 21:

This district is based around the North Country and Adirondack regions. It contains a number of small cities such as Watertown, Plattsburgh, Glens Falls, and Saratoga Springs, which all exert influence but do not dominate the district.

District 22:

The two small metropolitan areas of Binghamton and Utica-Oneida-Rome are united in this district.

District 23:

This district encompasses the core of the Syracuse metropolitan area, and adds a number of nearby small cities. Higher education is a strong economic uniter of this seat as Syracuse, Oswego, and Ithaca are prominent educational centers.

District 24:

This district encompasses rural areas and small towns in west-central New York, including most of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

District 25:

This compact district covers the core of the Rochester metropolitan area, staying entirely within the borders of Monroe County.

District 26:

Rural areas of Western New York and outer Buffalo Suburbs are placed together in this seat. This area is relatively culturally homogeneous.

District 27:
Contained entirely within the borders of Erie County, this district covers the core of the Buffalo metropolitan area.

Figure 1. The Downstate Region:

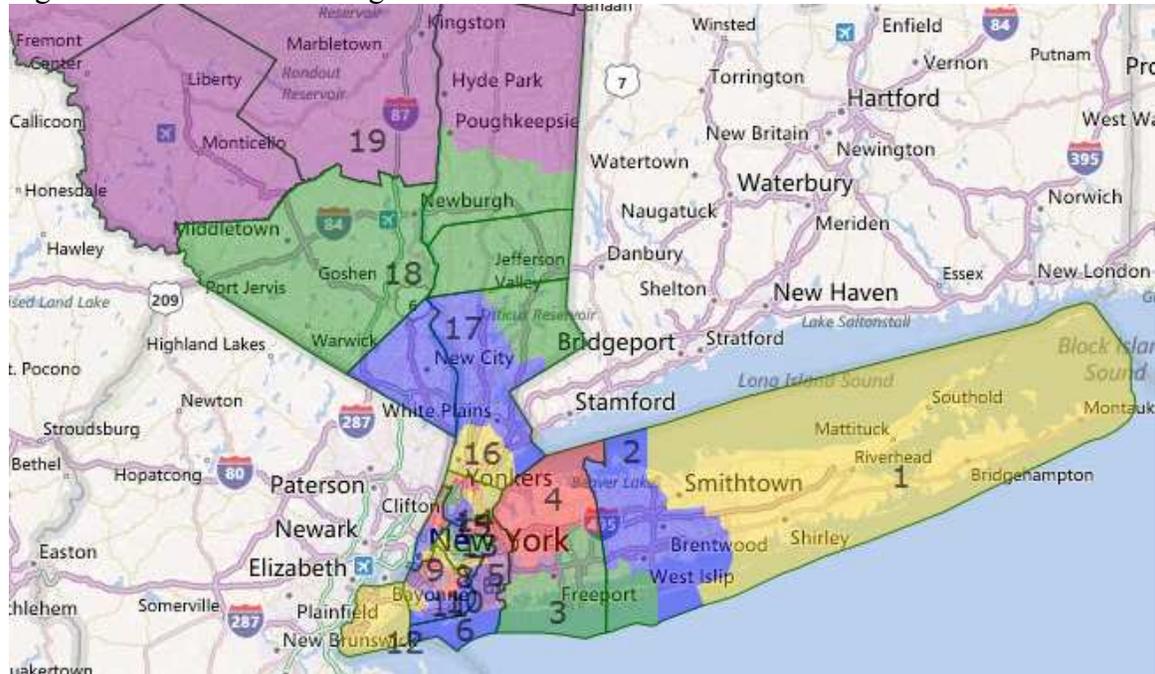


Figure 2. New York City:

